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An Educator's Guide to the "Four Cs"

Preparing 21st Century Students for a Global Society

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All educators want to help their students succeed in life. What was considered a good education 50 years ago, however, is no longer enough for success in college, career, and citizenship in the 21st century.

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Preparing 21st Century Students for a Global Society:

An Educator's Guide to the "Four Cs"

( PDF, 548 KB, 38 pgs.)

The "21st Century Skills" movement is more than a decade old. Yet, educators still pose important questions about how to move 21st century education forward. NEA has been an advocate of the 21st century education movement from its inception and wants to empower educators to move it forward in their own practice.

Ten years ago, NEA helped establish the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21) and in 2002 began a two-year journey to develop what became known as a "Framework for 21st Century Learning," highlighting 18 different skills. In the last eight years, 16 states joined P21 and agreed to build 21st century outcomes into

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eight years, 10 states joined 121 and agreed to build 21st century outcomes into their standards, professional development, and assessments.

Over the years it became clear that the framework was too long and complicated. To resolve this issue, we interviewed leaders of all kinds to determine which of the 21st century skills were the most important for K-12 education. There was near unanimity that four specific skills were the most important. They became known as the "Four Cs":

- critical thinking,
- communication,
- collaboration, and
- creativity.

Now the challenge is building the "Four Cs" into K-12 education. Discussions on this topic are pending at the federal and state levels and in many school districts around the country. To encourage more members and leaders to incorporate this policy into their own instruction, NEA developed this guide to introduce educators to the concept, stress the importance of the "Four Cs," and put 21st century education into classroom practice.

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"Lance Moat - So sad you think that way. I get to see great collaboration all the time from K-4th graders. Right now some are working on an Escape the Room Breakout for Education and there are lots of great ideas being shared and created in groups of 2-4."

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